

**Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**South Sevier High School  
430 West Ram Boulevard  
Monroe, Utah 84754**

**February 15, 2005**



Utah State Office of Education  
250 East 500 South  
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**South Sevier High School  
430 West Ram Boulevard  
Monroe, Utah 84754**

**February 15, 2005**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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## **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, February 15, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of South Sevier High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Russell T. Peterson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at South Sevier High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at South Sevier High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

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1/3/2005

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## **SOUTH SEVIER HIGH SCHOOL**

### **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

#### **School Administration**

Russell T. Peterson..... Principal  
Randy Madsen ..... Assistant Principal

#### **Counseling**

Scott Hunt ..... Counselor

#### **Support Staff**

Secretaries:	Custodians:	KaeLynn Gull
Kathy Anderson	Ken Finley, Head	Heather Huntsman
Nancy Ware	Mary Lois Foreman	Ronna Jackson
Media Coordinator:	Jeanette Lowe	Linda Leavitt
Joann Topham	Vickie Hunt	Larisa Mills
Writing Lab Asst.:	Larry Roberts	Keri Price
Loralee Anderson	Other:	Renae Woolsey
	Shauna Blake	

#### **Faculty**

Shelly Adams	Ryan Heath	Fran Oldroyd
Dustyn Allen	Stewart Hepworth	Rick Orr
Paul Anderson	Scott Hunt	Steven Peterson
Mike Bailey	Mary Jo Judd	Boyd Price
Barbara Balch	Randy Madsen	Paula Roberts
Scott Brady	Travis McAllister	Collin Rose
Joe Cottle	Aaron Merryweather	
Brent Hafen	DeDe Ogden	

## **SOUTH SEVIER HIGH SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to provide learning opportunities today for a successful tomorrow.

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

We believe...

Students' self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect.

Education is the responsibility of the entire community.

A safe and comfortable environment promotes student learning.

The school's commitment to continuous improvement is vital.

Accountability is essential.

There is a correlation between values and learning.

Use of a variety of instructional methods and approaches enhances student learning.

Students need opportunities to experience success.



## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Ben Lems, Olympus Junior High School, Granite School District,  
Visiting Team Chairperson

Marilyn Robinson, Bryce Valley High School, Garfield School District

George Miller, Utah State Office of Education

**VISITING TEAM REPORT**  
**SOUTH SEVIER HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

South Sevier High School is a rural school serving students in grades 9-12 in the southern end of Sevier County. The school has a student population of 398. Approximately 50 of these are Native American students from the southwestern states who are housed at the Richfield Residential Hall in Richfield. These Native American students make up 89 percent of the school's minority population. The school's close proximity to Snow College Richfield allows students the opportunity to enroll in courses at the college or in concurrent credit programs at the school.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Very little analysis of the profile was provided. The analysis was limited to a list of interventions to address issues identified by the Institute for Behavior Research in Creativity Survey (IBRCS). Interventions were categorized according to student concerns, parent concerns, and staff concerns, and dealt with such issues as cheating, decision making, substance abuse, sexual harassment, unity, consistency, fairness, and communication.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The staff has made significant progress in collecting data and evaluating departmental needs. In order to identify specific school-wide student achievement targets, the profile should include an analysis of all data and list disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity, grade level, and content cluster.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- Although evidence exists that focus areas were addressed informally, a focus group analysis was not included in the school profile. The Visiting Team suggests that the next critical step in continuing the self-study process is to formally organize focus groups to evaluate the school in terms of the seven focus areas.
- The Visiting Team suggests that data be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, grade level, and content cluster to identify individual and school-wide areas of need, and that this data be used to determine student achievement goals. In addition,

departments should meet often to address formative and summative evaluations of students in order to adapt the curriculum to fit students' needs.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team found that the staff has been actively engaged in the accreditation process for the past two years and that all stakeholders have had an opportunity for input in the self-study process, although input from students has been limited. The leadership team is to be commended for its efforts to engage all stakeholders in a collaborative self-study process. However, the teachers and administration would benefit from further in-service training in accreditation activities.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Information provided in the self-study focused primarily on the strengths and limitations of each individual department and on the results of the Institute for Behavior Research in Creativity Survey (IBRCS) of students, parents, and staff. These results and the department analysis now need to be integrated into a broader school-wide set of strengths and limitations tied to the desired results for student learning and a school-wide action plan.

Focus group activities were not present in the self-study. The presence of active focus groups can ensure that all aspects of the school are adequately addressed. These focus groups should be an ongoing part of the school structure.

## **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

South Sevier High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Students who possess the tools to be life-long learners
2. Students who are effective communicators
3. Students who gain respect for self and peers
4. Students who gain respect for the global community and the natural environment

5. Students who utilize critical thinking and problem-solving skills
6. Students who are able to function in a technological society
7. Students who develop a strong work ethic
8. Students who demonstrate productive and responsible citizenship
9. Students who maintain a balanced, healthful lifestyle
10. Students who experience, appreciate, and understand the arts

**Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The entire school community was involved in creating the school's mission statement. The mission statement and DRSLs are posted prominently in each room. During interviews, the faculty and members of the Student Council commented that they had participated in the creation of the mission statement and DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Visiting Team noted that the administration is very supportive of teachers in their efforts to achieve professional growth and development designed to bolster student achievement and success.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

One of the DRSLs, "Students who are effective communicators," was most evident in several classes where students had to prepare a presentation to demonstrate their learning (e.g., Computer Applications, history, and welding classes). Teachers commented to the Visiting Team that they appreciated this type of collaboration or working together. Students also expressed an interest in and desire for these types of cross-curricular activities.

The Visiting Team was told by several teachers that their students really try to work hard in their classes and that there is a strong work ethic among the students.

Last year, teachers asked to have presentation computer systems in more of the classrooms. Teachers reported that administrative and other funds were pooled together to purchase needed equipment. The Visiting Team noted that presentation technology was present in almost every classroom and had become a very important instructional tool in the classroom.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The Visiting Team found, through a review of the self-study and discussions with teachers, that there is some (although limited) collaboration between teachers and departments. Scheduling logistics seems to frustrate attempts at collaboration. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to explore innovative ways to find time that can be devoted to collaboration.

The school's curriculum is generally aligned with the State Core Curriculum. However, several staff members the Visiting Team spoke with were not familiar with the Utah Life Skills. No reference is made to the Utah Life Skills in the self-study except as implied in the DRSLs. An evaluation process should be developed to ensure that the curriculum is clearly defined and meets Utah Core and Utah Life Skills guidelines.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The staff members have begun to discuss how to explicitly teach the desired results for student learning within their departments. It was noted by the Visiting Team that the DRSLs are posted in every classroom, as well as the media center, administrative office, and hallways. Some teachers stated that they already teach some of the DRSLs explicitly. Others stated that they refer to them occasionally. It would be helpful if all staff members would refer to the DRSLs as they teach to help students make the connection between the curriculum and the DRSLs.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

It is evident that the staff designs and demonstrates a variety of effective instructional strategies that not only engages students but addresses a variety of learning styles. The Visiting Team observed teachers using group work, demonstrations, discussion, visual aids, technology-aided instruction, experiments, and hands-on activities. Almost all students were observed to be active in classroom activities during lesson times.

Library and media resources in the media center are actively used. There is a high demand for computer access for students from many different classes.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team observed a variety of different instructional strategies, from hands-on activities, worksheet completion, and computer research to direct instruction. Most teachers use multiple strategies within each class period. Teachers' use of technology is typically transparent and quite effective. Students see technology tools as a tool to be used in their study of history, math, science, etc.

The staff welcomes the inclusion of special education students. Teachers make accommodations to meet the needs of individual students as per the students' IEPs.

Based on interviews with teachers, there appears to be a lack of disaggregation of test data. Disaggregated information is critical to driving decisions about effective instructional strategies.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

South Sevier High School offers several learning strategies classes to assist students who need support with their academic work. All faculty members, as noted by students, take an active interest in the students. Many faculty members, including the principal, stay after school to help and tutor students. Three resource teachers and para-educators routinely tutor students in academic areas where student might need help. Disabled students are accepted and included in the school environment.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The formation of the DRSLs is relatively recent. The staff is encouraged to continue identifying and developing these instruments. The staff is encouraged to disaggregate and analyze the data from standardized tests, using the information to drive decision making.

The Visiting Team noted in one class that rapid assessment of learning was taking place, often just moments after performance of a task. This allowed students to quickly correct and modify their learning. The teacher was also noted as being friendly and courteous, but demanding of quality student performance.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

There is strong evidence that the staff has developed an understanding of the importance of using multiple assessments in evaluating student performance. The staff is encouraged to continue its efforts to develop a procedure to identify performance standards and connect assessments to those standards.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Through interviews that the Visiting Team conducted with students, it is evident that the staff is committed to fair and equitable assessment of student performance. As the staff continues to utilize multiple assessments and further refine the process of identifying performance standards and aligning appropriate assessment instruments to those standards, the assurance of equity and fairness is further guaranteed.

#### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

It is noted that the learning climate in the school is professional and inviting in all of the classrooms visited by the team. Classrooms and other parts of the school facility are well cared for. The personality and teaching strengths of each teacher are reflected in his or her room and teaching style. Students commented that teachers are friendly and want to do whatever is needed to help struggling students who need an extra hand. The Visiting Team noted that students, faculty, staff, and administration showed mutual respect for each other and are treated courteously. Teachers as a group expressed appreciation for the support they receive from the administration. Teachers are treated as professionals and in turn exemplify professionalism.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The lack of disaggregated data limits the school's ability to make informed, data-driven decisions. Although data is limited, the administration is cognizant of the need to collect pertinent information to improve the decision-making process and monitor school improvement efforts.

The Visiting Team recommends that the school use a collaborative model to share data and base decisions on best practices, current research, disaggregated data, and input from all stakeholders.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Teachers do a good job of assessing the progress of individual students in their classrooms. The Visiting Team recommends that the school adopt a variety of school-wide assessment practices to ensure that all aspects of a student's progress are taken into consideration.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The administration promotes a positive and safe learning environment. The Visiting Team noted that the building and grounds were well maintained and respected by the students. Classrooms were adequately cared for and effectively used. Recent additions to the building have added to its functionality.

School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission and are designed to support student learning. Students expressed a sense of genuine pride in attending South Sevier High School.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Scarce resources are put to good use. Teachers and administrators jointly make decisions on materials, textbooks, and other supplies for the school. A conscientious effort is made to align resources with school improvement efforts.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school supports and sustains change within the school and faculty. It should be noted that two years ago, this school went through an accreditation process that was primarily driven by the administration. Today, two years later, a different philosophy of productive change is evident. Teachers, students, and parents all commented that they felt included and their input was appreciated throughout the self-study process.



Because of an anticipated change in administration next year, the faculty expressed concern that the current progress in the accreditation process be continued. The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the positive changes and progress made in the last two years be sustained and supported by the district and the new administration.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team saw evidence of community fostered by parents, students, administrators, and staff members. There is a sense of safety and wellbeing at South Sevier High School, as well as a strong climate of pride demonstrated through parent involvement, administrative support, student connection, and staff dedication.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The administration works to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Teachers, parents, and members of the support staff feel that the administration is supportive of new ideas. Teachers meet every other week to discuss student issues. The Visiting Team commends the commitment made by the faculty to engage as a community of learners. Students expressed respect and appreciation for the dedication and concern of their teachers.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The Visiting Team noted that teacher comments were positive regarding the administration's support for their own professional development. Every other Friday is a shortened day to allow teachers the opportunity to collaborate together to work on lesson activities.

It should be noted, however, that student test results, either formative or summative, were rarely used to guide decision-making processes within departments.

There are a number of new faculty members within the staff. They commented that they are accepted warmly and have quickly become "part of the staff."

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school is supportive of the changes that are taking place at South Sevier High School. During the last two years the staff and administration have had to learn about the accreditation process and how it should work.

Student body officers and the Student Congress are given opportunities to serve and are expected to do so.

Department funds in a small rural school are indeed in short supply, and teachers are making do with the resources that they have at hand.

Community outreach efforts are happening within the school. However, some disturbing trends were noted in this area. First, the student newspaper has been discontinued. (However, a monthly flyer is sent home to parents and announcements are periodically aired over the local radio and television stations.) Second, the speech and drama classes no longer are part of the curriculum but exist only as extracurricular offerings after school.

There was a comment from some faculty members that they would like to see greater opportunities for the community to take part in school activities.

## **CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI**

### **Standard I – Educational Program**

This standard is met. South Sevier High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

### **Standard II – Student Personnel Services**

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

### **Standard III – School Plant and Equipment**

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

### **Standard IV – Library Media Program**

This standard is not met. Although there is a full-time staff member in the media center, she is not a certified media teacher. The school library media program, however, is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support.

### **Standard V – Records**

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

### **Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

This standard is not met. The school improvement plan does not focus on the total school, but rather on individual departments.

### **Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

### **Standard VIII – Administration**

This standard is met. The administration of South Sevier High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

### **Standard IX – Teacher Load**

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

## **Standard X – Activities**

This standard is met. South Sevier High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

## **Standard XI – Business Practices**

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

There is no school-wide action plan. Each department has formed its own improvement plan. The school should collaboratively review the department plans and develop a school-wide action plan that aligns with the data, mission, and desired results for student learning.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The administration, staff, and Community Council are committed to continuing the self-study process. The staff recognizes that the self-study was just the beginning and that more work needs to be done. Disaggregating data, organizing focus groups, and creating a school-wide action plan are critical next steps to continuing the self-study process.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

With the retirement of the current principal at the end of this school year, the staff is hopeful that the self-study process will continue. Therefore, the Visiting Team recommends that there be a revisit in two years to ensure that the recommendations listed in this report are being implemented. The Visiting Team further encourages the district to make the continuation of the accreditation process at South Sevier High School a high priority in their selection process for a new administrator.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team recognizes that the staff has made great progress since the last accreditation visit two years ago. The staff is to be commended for its willingness to revisit the self-study and complete the various elements of the accreditation process, and to involve all stakeholders in that process.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for the unity and support that exists among staff members in their relationships with each other and with students. Students at South Sevier High School feel safe, unified, and comfortable at school. They feel supported by the administration, counselor, and teachers. Teachers often stay late in the day to provide extra help to students. The caring attitude of the staff helps to create a positive learning environment.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and staff for their creative use of limited funds and resources to provide meaningful and relevant experiences for students through the sharing of materials and tapping of community resources such as Snow College South and Utah Valley State College.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for efforts being made to collaborate and work together within departments and across the curriculum to provide interdisciplinary connections for students.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for the work done on the department analyses. The administration is also to be commended for its support of the department action plans. Staff members feel supported by the administration in their efforts to implement the individual departments' improvement plans.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff members for their use and integration of technology in the classroom.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff members revisit the department analyses to more clearly define their responses to the essential questions. The Visiting Team further recommends that this evaluation continue on a regular basis.
- The focus group evaluation of instructional and organizational effectiveness at the school has not been addressed. The Visiting Team recommends that the school organize focus groups for the purpose of evaluating the seven criteria for

instructional and organizational effectiveness as the next critical step in the accreditation process. Focus groups should include members of the staff, community members, parents, and students. The Visiting Team recommends that this process be an ongoing activity.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff look for common threads in the self-study to determine school-wide goals that would focus on student achievement.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop an effective data collection and management system that can be utilized to provide reliable data for making judgments regarding academic growth by individual students or groups of students. This effort should extend to disaggregating both state and national norm-referenced test data by gender, ethnicity, grade level, content cluster, etc.
- Students were involved in the self-study on a very limited basis. The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders, including students, be participants in all aspects of the accreditation process. Increased communication with students, parents, and the community would help support the goals and objectives of the school's action plan.
- To expand opportunities for students, the Visiting Team recommends that funding for distance learning and other e-learning programs be increased.